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I.—SEQUEL OF THE CASE OF HENRY WILLIAMS, OF JAMAICA.

OUR readers cannot have failed to bear in their memories the atrocious case of Henry Williams, a slave, that was cruelly persecuted, and tortured almost to death, by a Jamaica magistrate of the name of Betty, who, if not instigated to the outrage of which he had been guilty by the Rev. G. W. Bridges, acted nevertheless, it appears, with his privity and approbation. The facts of this case are detailed in our preceding volume, No. 65, p. 356. Those facts having been made known by the Wesleyan Mission Society to Sir George Murray, he required Lord Belmore, the governor of Jamaica, to call on Mr. Betty and Mr. Bridges for an explanation of their conduct. In the No. 69, of the same volume, p. 431, we gave the determination of Mr. Betty to afford no explanation on the subject. Since that time, the correspondence upon it, between the local government and the Secretary of State, has been laid before the House of Commons, and printed, by an order of the 23d December, 1830, in a paper numbered 91. As the tenor of this document has been most grossly misrepresented, by the West India Reporter, the organ of the West India Committee, it seems incumbent upon us to obviate the misrepresentation, by a clear analysis of its contents.

We need not go over the statement of the facts of the case, as brought before Government by the Wesleyan Mission Society. They are precisely those which we have already described. Neither need we repeat the evasive reply of Mr. Betty, in which, without attempting to deny a single allegation of the Society, he absolutely refuses to render to the Secretary of State any explanation of his conduct. The sequel of this matter, as well as the real bearing of the whole case, will be best understood by transcribing two letters to Earl Belmore from the Secretary of State, Viscount Goderich, which form a part of this correspondence. The first is dated from Downing Street, 9th December, 1830, and is as follows :

“ My Lord.—Your despatch, dated the 27th of August last, enclosing a copy of a Report from the Attorney General of Jamaica, founded

on the answers of the Rev. Mr. Bridges and of Mr. Betty, to the charges preferred against them by Mr. Whitehouse, (the Methodist missionary,) has been received at this department.

"I observe that your Lordship entertained the intention of calling upon Mr. Whitehouse to substantiate his complaint against Mr. Betty, by transmitting authentic documents, verified on oath, to the Crown-office, 'when,' your Lordship adds, 'proceedings will be adopted, consonant with the principles of British judicature, to obtain a full and impartial investigation of the matter, so as to ensure a legal conviction or acquittal.'

"Your Lordship will do me the justice to believe that I am not less zealous than yourself to maintain, in all the acts of the executive Government, a steady adherence to those principles of impartial justice of which the 'British judicature' is the great security. I am bound to add, that I cannot discover in the conduct of my predecessor in office, in this case, any indication of a disregard of that principle. The constitutional rights of every class of His Majesty's subjects in Jamaica are, I cheerfully admit, not less sacred than those of the corresponding classes of society in Great Britain; and His Majesty will not, upon the advice of his ministers, ever assume any authority over the colonial magistracy which he is not entitled to exercise over the magistrates of England. The office, both in the colony and in the mother country, being gratuitous, and attended as it is in both with much inconvenience and even risk, the thanks of His Majesty's Government, and of the public at large, are justly due to those gentlemen who undertake, and faithfully execute, so onerous a duty. It must not, however, be forgotten, that the magistracy is a trust, of which the Crown, through its proper officers, is entitled to demand an account. A justice of the peace may often make an improper use of his powers, without exposing himself either to an action or an indictment, or he may, by personal misconduct unconnected with his judicial duties, render himself unfit to bear His Majesty's commission. When such cases occur in England, either the Lord Chancellor or the Secretary of State for the Home Department habitually demands from the magistrate accused an explanation of his conduct; and such applications are never, so far as I am aware, resented by the gentlemen to whom they are addressed as injurious or unconstitutional. I do not perceive, therefore, with what propriety Mr. Betty, while professing deference to the Secretary of State, can peremptorily refuse to answer his inquiries.

"Mr. Betty can scarcely mean to represent, that the charge preferred by Mr. Whitehouse was of so insignificant a nature that even if true it should not have attracted the attention of His Majesty's Government. He was accused of threatening to send his slave to gaol if he continued to teach among the Methodists, and with repeating that threat to the whole body of his negroes. He was represented as having inflicted a very severe flogging on the sister of his slave, Henry Williams, because she sighed on hearing this threat addressed to her brother. He was reported to have carried his threats against Henry Williams into execution, by imprisoning him in Rodney

Hall workhouse, in chains, until he was at the point of death. The slave was said to have been so cut up with severe floggings, that for several weeks his life was despaired of, and he was 'obliged to lie upon his stomach day and night, his back being a mass of corruption.' Mr. Betty was further accused of having ordered the confinement in prison of a female slave of Mr. Whitehouse's, with an iron collar about her neck. Lastly, he was said to have preferred against the slave Henry Williams a false and calumnious charge of theft. Your Lordship will not understand me as intimating any opinion of the truth of these imputations; but if, for the sake of argument, they were supposed to be true, Mr. Betty's dismissal from the magistracy would of course be inevitable. It is evident, therefore, that their truth or falsehood was a fact into which Sir George Murray was not merely entitled, but was strictly bound to inquire.

"Mr. Betty professes his readiness to meet any charge which may be preferred against him in a court of justice, where, he says, his actions will be investigated before a legal tribunal of twelve honest men. I cannot admit, in the present case, the validity of this excuse for declining to give the explanations required by my predecessor in this office. Your Lordship will observe, that Mr. Betty is not so much accused of acts positively illegal, as of a cruel and unjust use of his legal powers. I am not aware that he could be put on his trial in any court of justice for the threats which he is said to have addressed to his slaves respecting their religious observances. In his own domestic establishment he is, I apprehend, by the colonial law, a judge without appeal of the faults imputed by himself to his slaves, and if he really thought fit to flog a woman because she sighed at hearing her brother threatened, such an act of power, revolting though it may be to every just feeling, would hardly constitute an indictable offence. Even the imprisonment and the severe floggings of Henry Williams are matters not cognizable, to any practical effect, in the courts of Jamaica, because the master's right to whip, and even to imprison his slaves, is undisputed, and because every court must, in such a state of law, presume that the punishment inflicted was really deserved, unless the contrary can be shown. It is not said that Henry Williams ever received a greater number of stripes than the law allows; and to prove that no offence was committed justifying severe punishment, would be to establish a negative, in its own nature scarcely susceptible of proof. The shocking consequences which resulted from his punishment might, obviously, in a man of delicate health, be produced by a whipping which should not exceed the legal limitation. Mr. Betty's appeal to the legal tribunals of the colony, in justification of his silence on this occasion, is, I therefore think, not fairly made.

"It must further be remembered, that the court and jury before whom alone Mr. Betty will submit to have his conduct tried, could not fairly investigate the case, because the law of the island has disqualified the only persons to whom the facts are intimately known, from giving evidence respecting them. So long as the legislature of the colony shall maintain the distinction between the evidence of slaves and of free men, the gentlemen of Jamaica must be content to

bear the inconvenience to which such a state of law must subject them. They must not be surprised if the acquittals of the colonial courts fail to convince mankind of the innocence of the accused party: and persons invested with any public trust must be called upon for exculpations which, under a different system of law, it might be unjust to require.

"It is further to be noticed, that the Secretary of State has no power to compel Mr. Whitehouse to prosecute Mr. Betty; and there may be very sufficient reasons why Mr. Whitehouse, without any impeachment of his character, might decline the office of prosecutor. With the most conclusive moral evidence, he might be defeated, if his witnesses were slaves; or in the humble condition of life to which he belongs, Mr. Whitehouse may not have the funds necessary for conducting a prosecution. I therefore cannot concur in the accuracy of your Lordship's judgment, that this case was sufficiently disposed of by requiring Mr. Whitehouse to send depositions on oath to the Crown-office.

"I have entered thus largely into this subject from my anxiety to place your Lordship in full possession of the principles by which the conduct of His Majesty's Government will be guided in the present and in every similar case. While, on the one hand, they will never attempt to withdraw from the established courts any question properly falling within their cognizance, or to anticipate the judgment of those tribunals, they will, on the other hand, demand from every person holding a commission from the crown, an answer to any specific charge preferred by a responsible person, and which, though not capable of a satisfactory investigation in a court of law, may seriously affect the reputation and character of the public officer so accused.

"Above all, as the only means of mitigating in any degree the evils inseparable from slavery, they will in no case consent to the authority of a magistrate being suffered to remain in the hands of any person who cannot satisfactorily show that no ground exists for imputing to him a want of humanity, either in his official capacity or as a proprietor of slaves. It is to the magistrate alone that the latter have to look for protection from the abuse by their masters of the almost unlimited power they possess. This protection it is his first duty to afford, and if, instead of doing so, he is himself under just suspicion of undue severity, he is evidently unfit for his situation.

"Your Lordship will have the goodness to communicate to Mr. Betty a copy of the preceding parts of this despatch, acquainting him that I earnestly hope he will retract his determination to withhold any answer to the charges of Mr. Whitehouse, and fixing a time within which that answer will be received, but at the same time apprising him that if he should see fit to persist in maintaining silence on this subject, his name will be erased from the commission of the peace, not indeed as a man guilty of the offences laid to his charge, but as a magistrate who deliberately withholds from the King's Government that vindication of himself which it is at once their right and their duty to require. Your Lordship will, without further reference to the

Office, erase the name of Mr. Betty accordingly, if unfortunately he should not give the required explanations.

"Of course if any legal proceedings should have been taken against Mr. Betty, no explanation must be demanded from him by which he could be prejudiced in his defence, or which would involve any question which may be awaiting the decision of any legal tribunal. The preceding instructions have been given on the supposition that Mr. Whitehouse would be unable or unwilling to prosecute, or even that a prosecution may have failed, owing to the reasons already adverted to.

"I concur with your Lordship in opinion, that the answers given by the Rev. Mr. Bridges, as far as respects the punishment of his own slaves, and the case of the slave named 'George,' are satisfactory. Yet even with reference to these cases, I cannot exclude the remembrance of the fact that the alleged sufferers can neither sue for damages, nor be heard as witnesses in a criminal prosecution, a state of law which renders it impossible for the most innocent man effectually to relieve himself from all suspicion when accused of injustice or oppression towards persons in a state of slavery.

"I have not succeeded in discovering whether Mr. Bridges intends to admit that he encouraged Mr. Betty to send Henry Williams to gaol for attending a Methodist meeting. If Mr. Bridges did really promote or countenance any such proceeding, he must allow me to remind him that his laudable zeal for the interests of the Church of England might be much more usefully and effectually exercised in endeavouring to bring back Dissenters to her communion by gentleness and persuasion. The inutility of all opposite methods, and the certainty with which persecution counteracts its own design, are truths which I had hoped it was quite superfluous to inculcate in the present age of the world."

Immediately after this despatch had been transmitted to Lord Belmore, the Secretary of State received some farther information on the subject from the Methodist Mission Society, which gave occasion to his making the following further communication to Lord Belmore, dated the 11th of December, 1830.

"Since writing my despatch, dated the 9th instant, in the case of the complaint of Mr. Whitehouse against Messrs. Betty and Bridges, I have received from Dr. James Townley, the Secretary, as I understand, of the Wesleyan Methodist Society, a letter, dated the 8th instant, with various enclosures, copies of which I have the honour to transmit for your Lordship's information.

"Your Lordship will have the goodness to ascertain, and to report to me, whether the documents which Dr. Townley has transmitted are accurate copies of the correspondence between your Lordship's Secretary and Mr. Whitehouse, and whether they embrace the whole of that correspondence. Assuming (as I have no particular reason to doubt) the authenticity of these copies, I cannot conceal from your Lordship that I have read them with very sincere regret. They not only confirm the views which I had myself taken of the probable injustice of

disposing of this case by a reference to the legal tribunals, on the responsibility of Mr. Whitehouse, but they show that the difficulties to which I have adverted in my despatch of the 9th instant were fully, though ineffectually, brought under your Lordship's notice by Mr. Whitehouse himself. I regret that the remarks of that gentleman, though very clearly and forcibly stated, failed to produce in your Lordship's mind a conviction of the unreasonableness of imposing upon him the character of public accuser, which he so distinctly disavowed, and that you were not satisfied of the weight of those reasons by which he urged a reference of the case, either to the Attorney General, or to the Council of Protection, for further inquiry. The arguments of Mr. Whitehouse upon each of those topics do not, I confess, appear to myself susceptible of any satisfactory answer.

It would be exceedingly unjust were I to hold your Lordship responsible for the precise expressions of letters written not by yourself, but by the Deputy Secretary of the island, in giving effect to your instructions: yet I cannot forbear suggesting to your Lordship the propriety of admonishing Mr. Bullock to avoid, for the future, in official communications, apparently written with your Lordship's sanction, the use of language calculated to inflict unnecessary, and I must think, in the present case, unmerited pain. Thus, for example, when Mr. Whitehouse's letter of the 15th of September was characterised as 'diffuse and impertinent,' Mr. Bullock justly exposed himself to the rebuke contained in Mr. Whitehouse's subsequent letter, in which that gentleman observes that the use of such terms is 'scarcely consistent with civility, or the decorum of official correspondence.' The word 'impertinent' might have been possibly understood as synonymous with the word 'irrelevant,' rather than in its more harsh and ordinary sense; and if such was the meaning, I can only regret that Mr. Bullock did not disavow the more injurious construction which Mr. Whitehouse very naturally gave to his language. If these remarks should appear needlessly minute, your Lordship will bear in mind that the weight of your own official and personal authority has been used, although probably without your immediate sanction, to give force to comments still more particular, on the language and style of address adopted by Mr. Whitehouse. My sense of what is due to a gentleman engaged in the highly meritorious and painful, though ill-requited labours of a missionary, has drawn from me the preceding observations, which have not been written without much reluctance, because I feel that your Lordship may, perhaps, consider them as involving some disapprobation of your official conduct.

"I trust that your Lordship will believe that I am desirous and prepared on every occasion to afford you the utmost support and assistance in my power, and that I am fully alive to the difficulties in which you are placed, in the present times, in the discharge of the important and delicate trust with which you have been invested by His Majesty. But not even my disinclination to augment the embarrassment inseparable, in the present state of public opinion, from the Government of Jamaica, is sufficiently strong to prevent my pointing out to your Lordship, in the most distinct manner, the ne-

cessity of your affording your countenance and protection to the ministers of religion, while conducting themselves inoffensively, and the still more urgent necessity for a rigid and impartial scrutiny into every such abuse of the owner's power as was brought to your notice by Mr. Whitehouse in the case of Mr. Betty's slaves."

It would be impossible for us to do full justice to the haughty and supercilious as well as flippant and uncandid tone, which mark the official letters of the Governor's Secretary to this humble Missionary, or to the dignified calmness, conscious rectitude, and sterling good sense of his replications, without transcribing into our pages the whole of their communications, which would swell the present article beyond its due bounds. But this is rendered almost superfluous by the merited and pointed rebuke bestowed on Mr. Bullock by the noble Secretary of State, and by the just compliment he has paid to the acuteness, intelligence, and manly conduct of Mr. Whitehouse, forming, as they do, a most instructive contrast.

Again, what a revolting view of Colonial manners, and still more of Colonial justice and humanity, does this correspondence exhibit! All ranks of public functionaries, from the highest to the lowest, combining to uphold abuse and outrage, and to protect the perpetrators of them from exposure and punishment, and clinging with the most passionate attachment to those vile laws, which shut out the oppressed from all protection against the power and cruelty of the oppressor. Government and Parliament can no longer turn a deaf ear to the imploring cry of the wretched sufferers. They can no longer forbear from adopting measures to sweep away such abominations, and to make, not the planters only, but magistrates, and judges, and governors to feel that they can no longer, with impunity, persist in that course of partiality, deception and delusion which has tended to prolong the reign of a destructive despotism;—which permitted one noble governor, at the instigation of his advisers, to expatriate, in defiance of all law and justice, and yet with perfect impunity, several of the most deserving of the King's subjects in Jamaica;* and which has now combined the Government and magistracy of the same island, with the aid of Mr. Secretary Bullock, to screen from punishment the oppressors and persecutors of Christian Missionaries and their converts. These things cannot be endured much longer. They must cease ere long, together with the cruel and criminal system which they are designed to uphold.

Of the part taken by Mr. Bridges in the case of Henry Williams, or of his vapouring and evasive attempt at vindication, we need say nothing. His character has already been sufficiently illustrated in some former numbers, and especially in our last, where the original minutes of evidence respecting his treatment of his female slave, Kitty Hylton, will not fail remove all doubts which might previously have been entertained respecting him either as a man or as a Christian minister.

* We allude to the case of Lecesne, Escoffery, and Gonville.

II. — ESCHEATED SLAVES, AND OTHER SLAVES, THE PROPERTY OF THE CROWN.

If the reader will take the trouble of turning to our first volume, No. 19, p. 272, he will find a striking exemplification of the evils produced in the West Indies by the system on which the British government had too long proceeded in disposing of slaves escheated to the Crown through intestacy, and the illegitimacy of the children and other relations of intestates. The evil was one of great extent, and it had gone on unchecked until brought to light chiefly by the instrumentality of Governor Maxwell, then of Dominica, about the time when the recent discussions on Slavery commenced. It then appeared from inquiry, that the numerous slaves who, chiefly through that prevailing licentiousness which has filled the colonies with persons of illegitimate birth, had from time to time escheated to the Crown, and who, by becoming the property of the Crown, had recovered not merely their original, natural, and inalienable right to freedom, but had acquired, as the king's lieges, legal and constitutional claims to its enjoyment, were either sold at auction by the Crown, into an interminable bondage, in many of which cases the dearest domestic ties were recklessly and cruelly torn asunder, (see No. 19, p. 272), the price of this blood being paid into the king's treasury;—or they were given up again, by an order of the Lords Commissioners of his Majesty's treasury, into the slavery from which they had been providentially released, and assigned as bond-men and bond-women for ever to the persons whose illegitimacy had barred their inheritance of them as property. Various representations have been made at different times to the Government on this subject, and various delays of office have been interposed to prevent the final settlement of it on just and equitable principles. At length, however, we rejoice to say that a resolution has been recently adopted upon it by the present government, (suggested previously by the humane mind of Sir G. Murray), which is highly to their honour, and which affords the country an earnest of better views and feelings on the subject of Slavery, than have at all times swayed our Colonial councils.

We shall first lay before our readers the final resolution adopted by the Government on this subject, as it is contained in a letter from the Secretary of the Treasury, the Hon. J. Stewart, to Viscount Howick, Under Secretary of State for the Colonial Department, dated the 21st of January, 1831.

“ My Lord,—Having laid before the Lords Commissioners of his Majesty's Treasury your letter of the 9th December last, in reply to one from this Board, on the subject of disposing of slaves escheated to the Crown, I have it in command to acquaint your Lordship, for the information of Viscount Goderich, that my Lords have fully considered his recommendation for the disposal of all slaves escheated to the Crown, and they concur generally in the views which his Lordship has expressed on that subject, viz. that slaves escheated to the Crown ought to be dealt with in the same manner as slaves forfeited to the Crown under the Slave Abolition Act, as set forth in the Circular Letter from his Lordship's Department, addressed to the Governors of

the several West India Colonies, on the 16th October 1828, respecting slaves condemned to the Crown, referred to in Mr. Twiss's letter of the 6th April 1830. A consideration of the equitable claims of parties to the grant of escheated slaves has formed an impediment to any general arrangement for granting freedom to escheated slaves; but, under all the circumstances, my Lords are of opinion that the claim of the slave to receive his freedom from the King, after having become legally the property of the Crown, is superior to the equitable claim of any party to a grant of the slave, by the admission of which he would be retained in slavery."

In conformity with this resolution a Circular Despatch, of 24th January 1831, has been addressed by Lord Goderich to the Governors of all the West India Colonies, except Jamaica, to this effect.

"Sir,—I enclose for your information copies of a correspondence which has taken place between this Department and that of the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury on the subject of slaves escheated to the Crown. In conformity with the decision which you will perceive to have been taken by his Majesty's Government, you will cause any slaves who may now be in the possession of the Escheator General for the colony under your government, or of any other person holding them for the Crown as escheated property, or any slaves who may hereafter escheat to the Crown, to be forthwith liberated, and dealt with in the same manner as the captured Africans whose liberation was directed in Sir George Murray's Circular Despatch of the 16th October 1828."

Why Jamaica should have been excepted is not very obvious; but it is greatly to be regretted that it should have been found necessary to make such an exception, because in that island the evil has been of a magnitude and extent far exceeding in its proportion all the other slave colonies. The number of slaves escheated to the Crown in that island from 1807 to 1820, (paper of 1823, No. 347, p. 134, &c.) was 964, almost all of whom were either sold for the profit of the Crown, or granted by patent as slaves to different individuals. A return of the escheats since 1820 was called for by the House of Commons on the 6th June 1825, to which no return has been made. Of this act of disobedience the following singular explanation was given by the Duke of Manchester, in his despatch of the 4th March 1826, (papers of 1826, No. 353, p. 392). "I have not," says his Grace, "received from the Solicitor of the Crown, a return of the number and names of slaves escheated to the Crown, from the 1st January 1821," "although he received notice on the 9th November last to furnish it, and although an application to him on the subject was again made; but I understand he hesitates to comply with my directions, because his account for furnishing a similar return in March 1823, has been refused payment by the Lords Commissioners of his Majesty's Treasury." And who is this gentleman? And is he still the Solicitor of the Crown? And have the Lords of the Treasury borne with his contumacy? We beg to call the attention of their Lordships to this refractory officer, who, though intrusted with the escheats of the Crown, refuses to ren-

der an account of his trust, till paid for a former return which it could not have cost him above a few hours to transcribe, as it makes only seven pages. Thus are the public served in Jamaica! Is there then no person there who is *bound* to render to the Crown, and to Parliament, some account of the disposal, involving the life and liberty, of these wretched Escheats? We trust the matter will no longer be suffered to sleep; but that a peremptory mandate will go forth to enforce the demand of Parliament.

But besides the obvious propriety of extending to Jamaica the principle which has at length been adopted with respect to Escheats in other Colonies, we would take this opportunity of remarking, that there is still another numerous class of individuals to whom the same principle should forthwith be applied. We mean the large number of persons, who are, at this moment, held by the Crown, in a state of Slavery, in various Colonies, but who have as clear a title to freedom as the escheated slaves, or the liberated Africans, to whom the Escheats are now assimilated. Of these slaves of the British Crown, (we feel shame in having so to term them) there are in the Mauritius alone about 1350, in Grenada about 380, in Berbice 300, in Demerara 270, in Trinidad, Antigua and Tobago about 170, making in all nearly 2500 souls. Ought these persons to remain any longer in their bondage? Are they not at least as fit for freedom as the multitudes who have already been raised to the enjoyment of it from the holds of slave ships, both in the West Indies and at Sierra Leone? Nay, are they not unquestionably much more so, many of them being skilful mechanics or practised house servants, and most of them being Creoles? The real reason, we believe, for the continued detention of these persons in bondage, is to be found in the selfishness of too many of the public functionaries, in the different Colonies, who derive advantage from their services as slaves, and who are therefore generally opposed to their liberation, and are ready to bring forward all sorts of untrue pretexts, to induce Government to delay this act of justice, while the real reason is the convenience and profit which they themselves, at much expence to Government, and to the lasting injury of the poor people, derive from this abuse. In the Mauritius alone the governor has about a hundred of these Crown slaves in his establishment. In the same way have the Governors of Demerara and Berbice been supplied with domestics and labourers; many of them being also distributed among the various functionaries, civil and military—and as the expense is borne by the public, much waste and profusion must be the consequence.—These slaves of the king ought all forthwith to be declared free, and to have adequate portions of the Crown lands assigned them. In Antigua, the Bahamas, Berbice, Demerara, Dominica, Grenada, St. Vincent, Trinidad, and other Islands, there is an abundance of such land still ungranted, of small portions of which they might forthwith be put in possession, leaving it to them however to make their election, as to whether they shall cultivate the ground, or pursue, for their own profit, their present mechanical, or menial employments.—We perceive, in the paper now before us respecting escheated slaves, a question incidentally mooted as to what shall be done

with nearly 400 slaves forfeited to the king in Grenada; whether they shall continue to be worked under the whip, as *slaves*, for his benefit, on about 1000 acres of land, in the deathful occupation of sugar planting; or be given up as slaves to the heirs of those planters who had incurred the forfeiture. It seems not to have occurred to any one that the lands they now cultivate, as slaves of the Crown, might be advantageously allotted to them; and that they might be thus converted into a free and happy peasantry, instead of continuing as now a source of perpetual expence and embarrassment to the Treasury; of jobbing to individuals; of misery to themselves; and of disgrace to the Crown and to the country. We are persuaded that the present Government only require to have the facts of this and similar abuses placed before them to insure the application of an effectual remedy.

III.—EXTRACTS FROM THE JAMAICA WATCHMAN.

1. IN several successive numbers of this work for October and November last, is contained an able review of Mr. Alexander Barclay's attempted refutation of Mr. Stephen's "delineation of Colonial slavery," in which the deliberate misrepresentations and falsifications of Mr. Barclay are very fully and satisfactorily exposed, and justice done to the graphic accuracy of Mr. Stephen's statements. We need not go over ground over which we have so often conducted our readers. The appearance of such an article, however, in a Jamaica journal, constitutes a fact worthy of being recorded. The Editors charge Mr. B. with having "wilfully and systematically garbled the statements of Mr. Stephen. Unfairness and misrepresentation," they add, "mark every page of his laboured attempt to make 'the worse appear the better reason,' and although rewarded by a seat in the legislature of the Island," they deem him bound to come forward, and at least endeavour to explain "the inconsistencies and contradictions of which he has been guilty." If he refuses to do this, "there can be but one interpretation put upon his silence, namely that, aware of the badness of his cause, and the impossibility of defending it against those whose personal acquaintance with the minutiae of West India slave management is equal to his own, he wisely refrains from provoking a discussion which must elicit facts utterly at variance with his assertions." Watchman of Nov. 3, 1830.

2. The Watchman of the 10th Nov. 1830, contains some serious representations respecting the conduct of the Rev. Mr. WORDIE, the minister of the Scotch Kirk in Kingston, which it certainly behoves his superiors at home to investigate. We mention it for the purpose of calling their attention to the subject, which is again renewed in the Watchman of the 15th Dec. 1830. If the statements contained in these two papers be correct, Mr. Wordie would appear to have laid himself open to heavy censures from the Church to which he belongs.

3. "The disallowance of the slave law the House of Assembly declares has disappointed their *just* expectations. How they will make it appear that their expectations were either just or reasonable, we

know not. Common sense, however, declares, that after his Majesty's ministers had expressed their determination not to advise the sanctioning of any law, which trench upon the right of every British subject to worship his Creator, in the way most congenial to his own feelings, it was neither just nor right, nay, it was ridiculous and absurd in them to suppose that because *they* thought differently, his Majesty's Government would depart from its uniform tolerant course, and gratify their intolerant and vindictive feelings by consenting to a law which has hatred to religion and religious teachers, intolerance, and persecution, legibly impressed upon its front!

"It is really laughable to hear such men, as compose the Jamaica Assembly, declaring in an address to the governor, that they 'considered that his Majesty's Government would at length be convinced of the expediency of accepting for the slaves their concessions.' His Majesty's Government 'convinced of the expediency of accepting concessions,' from whom? With few exceptions a company of insolvent debtors!! Concessions! The Assembly of Jamaica granting concessions to the British Government!" *Watchman* of Nov. 13, 1830.

4. In our third volume, No. 64, p. 341, an account is given of the trial and conviction of a poor slave named Samuel Swiney, for the crime of praying to God, for which crime he was sentenced by Mr. Finlayson, the chief magistrate of Westmoreland, and then Speaker of the House of Assembly, to a severe flogging and hard labour in chains for a fortnight. In the *Watchman* of Nov. 20, 1830, is contained the following letter, respecting this individual, addressed to the Editor by the Baptist Missionary Mr. Knibb, which we are persuaded our readers will peruse with satisfaction, as exhibiting the triumph of persecuted piety.

"SIR,

"It is with much pleasure I inform you that the appeal made on behalf of Samuel Swiney, which was published in the *Struggler*, and copied into your valuable paper, has not been made in vain. By the last Packet I have received a communication from a friend in London, from which I extract the following paragraph:—

"The immediate object of my writing is to request that you will take the PROMPTEST measures for the manumission of our PERSECUTED FRIEND AND BROTHER Samuel Swiney, and draw on me for the amount required."

"It is but justice to add, that the owner, Aaron Deleon, junior, Esq., has, throughout the whole of this disgraceful affair, acted in the most noble and disinterested manner; and on my making application to him for the freedom of his slave, he instantly sent the papers required, accompanied by a donation of £20 towards the emancipation of his persecuted servant.

"Requesting the publication of this, that my friends in England may see that I have not lost any time in fulfilling their wishes.

"I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

"WILLIAM KNIBB."

5. The Watchman of the 4th of December 1830, contains a full account of a public dinner given at Kingston, by the coloured inhabitants of that city, to celebrate the return, from their long and cruel exile, to their native land, to their families and friends, of Messrs. Lecesne, Escoffery, and Gonville. The speeches made on the occasion reflect great credit on the talents and principles, and still more on the right feelings of the gentlemen who came forward. We can find room only for one specimen, and it is taken from the speech of Mr. Lecesne himself. "Considering the circumstances under which we quitted this island, and have now, after seven years' exile, returned to it, it may be expected, as well by our opponents, as by our friends, that we should offer some public expression of our feelings; and we are anxious to satisfy such an expectation, by openly declaring the gratitude we feel for the sympathy of the one class, and the sincere disposition we entertain to bury in oblivion the wrongs we have personally sustained from the other. It is, indeed, not easy, on such an occasion as this, to avoid giving utterance to expressions of that satisfaction which must naturally fill our breasts; but we will assure our opponents, that neither our words, nor our conduct, shall ever express that satisfaction in a tone of triumph or exultation. I do not say it to you, but to those who are still disposed to give credit to the fabricated charges against us, that we never did, for a moment, cherish a wish or a purpose hostile to the peace of the island, and this, I believe, is now acknowledged by all parties. It would, indeed, therefore, be ungrateful, as well as most foreign to our inclinations, now, for the first time, to act in any manner that might revive a charge, the futility of which is confessed by his Majesty's Government, in restoring us to our country. But, my friends, there is a subject on which we may freely express ourselves, and on which no language can do justice to our feelings. We left this island under circumstances of degradation and of ruin. We became suddenly outcasts from society: and all our prospects in life appeared blighted. Our characters seemed for ever clouded. Separated from our families—cut off from every resource, and expelled from our homes, so suddenly that we had not time even to make such arrangements as might save the wreck of our property, or provide the means of redeeming our characters from the unmerited reproaches to which we were subjected—all chance of obtaining redress was lost, except in an appeal to the equity of the British Parliament. Yet, under these circumstances of accumulated sufferings, we derived support from the kind sympathy and assistance of the friends we left behind, many of whom I now see around me; and we found protection from those to whom we went with no other introduction than our misfortunes. This double debt of gratitude can never be repaid; and though no acknowledgement of its weight can diminish it, we rejoice to make it.—Gentlemen, it is inexpedient, for obvious reasons, to point public attention to individuals in this island, who have been our friends and benefactors, during our protracted sufferings; but there is one in England, whose name must not, cannot, be suppressed. It is to Dr. Lushington we are indebted, under heaven, for all we now enjoy—our return to our homes—our indemnity

for our losses—and, above all, our restoration to the credit and good fame we formerly enjoyed—are derived from his beneficence—from his energetic advocacy of our case—his firm and reiterated appeals in our behalf to the House of Commons—and his unwearied exertions in unravelling the tangled web of accusation in which we were involved. His reward for this can only be obtained from God. But we earnestly hope, that that extensive class to which we belong will assist us in shewing the reverential feeling we shall ever entertain towards him, by a steady perseverance in that loyalty and good conduct which induced him to step forward as our advocate on this occasion. Believe me, when I assure you, gentlemen, that of all earthly rewards, this will be the most grateful to his mind. In attempting to do justice to Dr. Lushington, we must not forget that it is to the equity of his Majesty's Government that we owe the success of his exertions. It was not to be expected, that a case, which, through the instrumentality of a certain gentleman, had become so complicated in its circumstances, could obtain immediate attention, or until its merits were fully developed, could obtain redress. Long, therefore, as our exile has been, and bitter as have been the privations, and the domestic sufferings it brought with it, we are far from complaining of its duration. Indeed, we rather rejoice at it in one view, because it can never be said that we have been exculpated and indemnified without a *full, minute, and patient enquiry* into our deserts. Gentlemen, throughout this long enquiry, his Majesty's Government bore steadily in mind the principle, that justice must be done without reference to rank, or colour, or station in the world—and on this topic, a tone of exultation may be forgiven, not at our personal success—not because we are individually victors in a political contest—but because we, in common with ourselves, are the subjects of a Government which administers its protection with an impartial hand. In the humble sphere of life in which we move in this island, it will be our unremitting endeavour to conciliate the respect of our enemies, (if we still have any)—by firmness, united with moderation and temper, and thereby prove to the friends we have made during our absence, that we are not unworthy of the countenance they have given to us."

6. In our third volume No. 71, p. 477, we have inserted the testimony of the Rev. John Thorpe, late of St. Thomas in the East, in Jamaica, now curate of Wiggington, Oxon, to the nature and effects of the slavery of which he had been there the eye witness, as given in a speech delivered by him at a public meeting at Cheltenham, on the 7th of October, 1830. This speech is transcribed, verbatim, into the Jamaica Watchman of the 5th of January, 1831. In the succeeding Watchman of the 8th of January, the Editor comments upon it as follows:

"That a speech like the one alluded to, exposing so fully the evils of slavery in all their hideousness, could have been delivered without producing a strong feeling in the minds of all, who have either heard or have read it, it would be taxing our credulity too heavily to believe; and if we take into consideration, the fact of all Mr. Thorpe's statements being substantially correct, and that he has merely delineated,

without colouring, the evils of the abhorred system, it will be easy to perceive, that the effect will be deep and lasting, leading to a firm and unbending opposition to slavery in all its varied forms and gradations.

"Judging from the means which the friends of humanity, in Great Britain, are using to bring about so desirable a consummation as the extinction of slavery, it is clear that the spirit to which we have alluded, has already spread over the greater part of happy Britain, and is silently, though securely, working the downfall of a system which must, ere long, be crushed by its own weight.

"To those who, from self interest, or an over tenacious fondness for the absolute power with which the system of slavery has invested them, the inquiry is, How shall we prevent this? By what means may the perpetuity of the system be ensured? Alas! to these the horizon appears dark and lowering, and the wished for expedient is sought in vain. Were we, instead of being opposed, favourable to the system, and desirous of helping these persons out of the labyrinth, we should but consider it honest to declare the fulfilment of their wishes impossible, and the inconsistent shuffling and ridiculous attempts that have been made, and are making, to support it, as tending the more fully to convince its opponents, that a love of the system, more than the apprehension of danger from any change, actuate those who are so loud in its defence, and ready in opposing every amelioratory measure proposed for their acceptance.

"Do the Colonists really wish to avoid the evils of a sudden change in the condition of the peasantry? If they did, they would endeavour to shake off the lethargy in which they are sunk; and, exercising the little reason which yet remains unsubdued by the monster prejudice, they would perceive that the system is fast verging to destruction, and must soon come to an end. This conviction, once impressed on the mind, would lead to the conclusion that amelioration is now the *sine qua non* of their safety; and they would take such measures for the religious and temporal improvement of their negroes, as would ensure their gratitude and affection, and leave them the voluntary servants of their present masters; and, instead of a system of oppression and cruelty, on the one hand, and hatred and dissatisfaction on the other, mutual confidence and dependence would exist, and the landed proprietors will have the pleasure of witnessing around them a happy and contented free peasantry, the country improved, and their own condition rendered more comfortable and secure.

"But, perhaps we may be told, in the usual 'cant' expressions, that the negroes are a sleek, well fed, happy, and contented race, possessing comforts far superior to those enjoyed by the British peasantry. This may be sufficient to gull those who know no better; but by us it passes unheeded as the idle wind. Nor is there a planter, or slave owner in the island, who, if he would but be candid, can deny that his situation is irksome, vexatious, and disagreeable in the extreme. How often do we hear them declaring that they are 'tormented out of their lives' by the negroes, who are 'eternally complaining,' and always discontented and dissatisfied? Is this, then, a proof of their being 'well fed, happy, and contented?' Do these negroes not re-

peaceably leave the plantations, in bodies of from forty to fifty, and sometimes seventy or eighty, and travel eighteen or twenty miles to Spanish Town to the Governor, or to Kingston and other places to the magistrates, to complain of ill treatment? Is this a proof of their being 'happy and contented?' Have we not repeatedly heard of almost all the negroes on an estate having gone, to use the negro term, '*na bush*;' or, in plain English, run away, and hid themselves in the woods, or mountainous parts of the country, for days, nay weeks? Will this also be urged as evidence of their happy and contented condition? No! the system is bad—it subjects the negroes to cruelty and oppression, and it transforms the master into a petty tyrant, and destroys insensibly in his mind the love of justice, and the feelings of humanity, affection and delicacy, which elevate the character of man, and make him indeed the noblest work of God!"

IV.—MEMORIAL OF THE WEST INDIA COMMITTEE.

AN elaborate statement from this Committee has recently been printed by order of the House of Commons, (7th Feb. 1831, No. 120.) It professes to give to Parliament and the public an authentic view of "The commercial, financial, and political condition of the West India Colonies." As this paper abounds in fallacies as gross, and representations as delusive as any to which even this controversy has given birth, fertile of imposture as it has been during nearly half a century, we shall take an early opportunity of exposing some of them to the judgment they deserve.

V.—THE CHRISTIAN REMEMBRANCER.

WE have been amused by the clamour raised, and the vituperation bestowed upon us, this month, by the *Christian Remembrancer* and other pro-slavery journals. In our No. 68, (p. 422,) we inserted a statement, to which we attached credit, respecting a school established by the Bishop of Barbadoes, in Bridgetown, for both free and slave children. Our informant had visited this school, and he reported favourably of it; but he added, that on the day of his visit he found many free children, but only three or four slaves present. The Bishop, seeing this account, and eager to disprove it, has transmitted certified lists, not of the number of the free and slaves present on the particular day on which our friend chanced to visit the school, but the number of each borne on the books of the School Committee, and which appear to be nearly equal, about 90 of each class. These numbers, we doubt not, are correctly given; but still both the Bishop and the *Christian Remembrancer* must be logicians enough to see that they furnish no contradiction to our traveller, who merely asserts, that on the day of his visit he found only three or four slaves present. It is obvious indeed, that the slaves would be less likely to attend regularly than the free. We are glad that the Bishop reads the *Anti-Slavery Reporter* so diligently; and that the *Christian Remembrancer*, with all his good will, finds no more to say against it.

